

Activity: Are Homemade Cleaners Safer?

Are homemade cleaners a safer choice than some commercial cleaning products you use?

Put Glass Cleaners to the Test

Make a simple and safe homemade cleaning product and then compare it to a commercial product.

Here's what you'll need: ✓ vinegar ✓ tablespoon ✓ tap water
✓ spray bottle ✓ supplies for making a label ✓ commercial glass cleaner

1. Make a simple glass cleaner by combining 2 tablespoons vinegar with 1 quart water in a clean spray bottle.
2. Make a label for your homemade glass cleaner. Include information like the contents, what it's used for, how to store it, and any other important things you think need to be on the label.
3. Put your product to the test. Use your homemade cleaner to clean a dirty window. Then use a commercial window cleaner on another dirty window. Which one cleans better or faster than the other?
4. Compare the cost. How much did the commercial cleaner cost? Figure out how much it cost to make your own cleaner. Don't forget to include the cost of the spray bottle, the vinegar, items to make the label, and your time.
5. Rate the products on all their qualities. Which one is better?

Now Consider This

Homemade products may not be good alternatives for the following reasons:

- **Homemade products may not be safer than commercial products or may not have been tested for safety or environmental impact.**
- **Homemade products may not be stored properly.** Containers should be child-resistant and pet-resistant. Storing homemade products in containers previously used for commercial products may pose unexpected hazards. The ingredients of the homemade product may react with residue from the commercial product or with the material used to make the container itself.
- **Homemade products may not be labeled with all of the important product information,** such as ingredients and safety and disposal procedures. Without proper labels, the user may not be able to tell whether the mixture is toxic, corrosive, or dangerous if mixed with another substance.
- **Information about the ingredients of homemade products may not be registered with poison control centers.** Also, homemade products have no company information and phone number listed on the label to help consumers provide fast treatment in case of an accident.
- **Homemade products may be less effective than commercial ones,** causing consumers to spend more time and use more of the product.

